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26841	7590	11/18/2003	EXAMINER	
MARK P. BOURGEOIS P.O. BOX 95 OSCEOLA, IN 46561			PARA, ANNETTE H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1661

DATE MAILED: 11/18/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
AND INTERFERENCES**

Paper No. 14

Application Number: 09/944,932  
Filing Date: August 31, 2001  
Appellant(s): Notcutts Limited

MAJ:

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Mark P. Bourgeois  
For Appellant

**EXAMINER'S ANSWER**

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This is in response to the appeal brief filed July 23, 2002.

**(1) Real Party in Interest**

A statement identifying the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

**(2) Related Appeals and Interferences**

A statement identifying the related appeals and interferences, which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the decision in the pending appeal is contained in the brief.

**(3) Status of claims**

The statement of the status of the claims contained in the brief is correct.

**(4) Status of Amendments after Final**

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

**(5) Summary of Invention**

The summary of invention contained in the brief is correct.

**(6) Issues**

The appellant's statement of the issues in the brief is correct.

**(7) Grouping of claims**

There is only a single claim.

**(8) Claims appealed**

The copy of the appealed claim contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

**(9) Prior Art of Record**

The following is a listing of the prior art of record relied upon in the rejection of claim under appeal.

United Kingdom Plant Breeder's Right grant number 03000204, published on January 1, 1998.

**(10) Grounds of Rejection**

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

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Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Plant Breeder's Right grant number 03000204 in the United Kingdom, in view of applicant's admission that 'Charam' was sold in The United Kingdom as early as April 1 1998 (page 3 of reply filed October 18, 2002).

The grant was published on January 1, 1998 more than one year prior to filing of the instant application. The grant is a "printed publication" under 35 U.S.C. 102 because it is accessible to persons concerned with the art to which the document relates. See *In re Wyer*, 655 F.2d 221, 226, 210 USPQ 790, 794 (CCPA 1981). See MPEP § 2128. The Federal Office of Plant Varieties publishes applications for variety protection. Once the Breeder's Grant is made, the variety and description are entered in the Plant Variety Protection Register. The register, grant and published applications are accessible to the public.

Thus information regarding the claimed variety, in the form of the publication noted above, was readily available to interested persons of ordinary skill in the art. A publication relied upon as prior art under 35 USC 102(b) must be enabling. The text of the relied upon publications standing alone would not enable one skill in the art to practice the claimed invention. However, when the claimed subject matter is disclosed identically by a reference, an additional reference may be relied on to show that the primary reference has an "enabled disclosure." *In re Samour*, 571 F.2d 559, 197 USPQ 1 (CCPA 1978) and *In re Donohue*, 766 F.2d 531, 226 USPQ 619 (Fed. Cir. 1985). See also MPEP § 2131.01. When the claim is drawn to a plant, the reference, combined with knowledge in the prior art, must enable one of ordinary skill in the art to reproduce the plant. *In re LeGrice*, 301 F.2d 929, 133 USPQ 365 (CCPA 1962). If one skilled in the art could reproduce the plant from a publicly available source, then a publication describing the plant would have an enabling disclosure. See *Ex parte Thomson*, 24 USPQ2d 1618, 1620 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1992) ("The issue is not whether the [claimed] cultivar Siokra was on public use or sale in the United States but, rather, whether Siokra seeds were available to a skill artisan anywhere in the world such that he/she could attain them and make/reproduce the 'Siokra' cultivar disclosed in the cited publications."). See also MPEP § 2121.03.

While the publication cited above discloses the claimed plant variety, a question remains as to whether the reference is enabling. If the plant was publicly available, then the granted PBR certificate,

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combined with knowledge in the prior art, would enable one ordinary skilled in the art, to reproduce the claimed plant. Appellant has admitted that the claimed plant was for sale more than one year prior to application for U.S. patent and thus was in the public domain. As a result, one of ordinary skill in the art could have bought the plant and asexually propagated it, thus reproducing the invention.

**(11) Response to Arguments**

Appellant argues (page 2-3 of brief) that the public use and availability of the subject plant variety outside of the United States is not material to a determination of "plant patentability" of a plant variety in the United States under 102(b). The rejection is based on a printed publication, not public use or sale. The printed publication bar applies no matter where the publication was made. Public availability of the plant shows that the publication was "enabled". Applicant's argument is not persuasive to patentability, as there is no geographic component of enablement. For example, for a patent specification to be enabling, there is no requirement that the starting material, required to produce the claimed invention, must be located in the United States. See *Ex parte Rinehart*, 10 USPQ2d, 1719, (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989). A printed publication identifying the breeder and assignee of a particular plant in combination with the public availability of the plant places the plant in the public possession. Appellant admits the invention was on sale for the first time in the United Kingdom on April 1, 1998 (page 3 reply filed on October 18, 2002).

Appellant argues (page 3 of brief) that it is improper to rely on a combination of references to anticipate the claimed invention under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Examiner would like to point out that the admission of Appellant that the plant was on sale more than one year prior to application for U.S. patent is not "supplementing" the primary reference, rather the sale of the plant provides proof that the primary reference was enabling. The examiner would like to point out how the two cited cases support the rejection that was made under 102(b). As noted in *In re Samour*,

"a printed publication which discloses every material element of the claimed subject matter, would constitute a bar under 35 USC 102(b) to appellant's right to a patent if, more than one year prior to appellant's filing date, it placed [the claimed subject matter] 'in possession of the public.' Whether claimed subject matter was in possession of the public depends on

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whether a method of preparing the claimed subject matter would have been known by, or would have been obvious to, one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art." 197 USPQ at 3-4 (citations omitted).

The court noted that a printed publication that places the invention in possession of the public would constitute a bar under 35 USC 102(b). This language is also used in *LeGrice* as is discussed in further detail below. A printed publication identifying the breeder and assignee of a particular plant in combination with the public availability of the plant places the plant in the public's possession.

The court further noted that the disclosure in the primary reference must be considered together with the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art, and that it is appropriate to rely on additional references solely as evidence that, more than one year prior to appellant's filing date, a method of preparing the claimed subject matter would have been known by, or would have been obvious to, one of ordinary skill in the art. 197 USPQ at 4.

Appellant argues (page 4 of brief) that *In re LeGrice* case was concerned with whether or not foreign plant varieties are actually available to the American public. This is incorrect. *LeGrice* was concerned with whether printed publications must be enabled to anticipate a claimed invention. In *LeGrice* there is no requirement for access to the plant by Americans. Also, Americans could have purchased the plant and imported it (through quarantine). Biological material is considered available even if it must pass through quarantine. See MPEP 2404.01 (last paragraph). The question in *LeGrice* was whether publications must be enabling to support a rejection under 102(b). The answer was yes, the invention must be in possession of the public. Public use or sale can put the invention in the public domain. Once in the public domain, printed publications are enabled because one can readily obtain the starting materials necessary to make the invention, as set forth in the *Thomson* decision.

Appellant argues (page 5 and 6 of brief) that "...a new plant cannot be anticipated without direct access in the United States to the new plant." Examiner respectfully questions the support for this argument. There is no support for this position in statute or case law. This is not persuasive as in paper number 5, page 3, Appellant has admitted that the claimed Euphorbia plant was first sold in the United

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Kingdom on April 1, 1998. The PBR document precisely refers to the species of plant and the name of the plant. Since this plant was sold more than one year prior to the effective filing date of the present application, one skilled in the art would have been able to purchase and propagate the plant "without experiments or further inventive skill". One of ordinary skill in the art would have been able to reproduce the plant asexually and grow it without experimenting further with the plant in order to obtain the claimed invention. By using the referenced publication, one of skill in the art would have been able to contact the Appellant, Breeder, and Title Holder of the plant in question (information included on the referenced publication) and subsequently obtain a plant, since it was being marketed by Appellant's own admission. Such a plant would thus have been in the public's possession due to information in the publication.

Furthermore, except for the type of patent sought, the instant application presents the same fact pattern in *Thomson*. The printed publications cited in *Thomson* were not enabled by Applicant's deposit of seeds **but by the commercial availability of the seeds outside the United States** (emphasis added). As stated in *Thomson*, "we are convinced that the skilled cotton grower would have had the wherewithal, upon reading the publicly disseminated reference articles, to purchase the commercially available Siokra seeds and employ conventional techniques to plant and nurture the seeds to maturity in order to obtain the claimed invention, i.e., Siokra plants, seeds and pollen. It is reasonable to conclude that, at the time the cited articles were published, skilled artisans throughout the world would have found Siokra seeds readily available on the open market. 24 USPQ2d at 1620.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

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Respectfully submitted,

Annette H Para

November 5, 2003



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